

The second Laci was born, people knew, people pressured he was a wrestler. By the time he was two years old he was already hungry to wrestle, questioning when he would ever get the chance. But all this time led up to one dream, to be a state champ. His childhood seemed short, compared to the longevity of the rest of his life. Laci participated in average child like things, like playing little league, or even pelting the poor squirrels in his yard with his brand new wrist rocket. Although Laci might have been an everyday little trouble maker, he was set to be much more than just that.

As life went on he had hit the age of Seven, the age where he could accomplish one of his many goals, become a wrestler. By far Laci was the hardest worker in that wrestling room, most kids were his friends until they felt how quickly he could pin them to that mat. Although that might have been rough, still the majority loved Laci as a Friend, and he did too. Win, after win he had proved himself that he wasn't ordinary, not just an average kid, a champion. Kids tried to challenge him, but the kids his age were no competition whatsoever. After a couple weeks through the season, coach decides to move him to the other room for better competition, better kids. Murmurs ruled the hallways of how this was no good decision, but Laci hung tough. Matches soon started and shirts, sweatshirts and other apparel were distributed to the team. Worn proud by Laci, with the sweatshirt beholding his name, he felt as if he was a team much bigger than a recreation program but, somewhere that can take him places. "Look at the kid, acts like some big show and enters OUR room, OUR practice, bet ya' he can't get past half the kids here." Laci overheard the mutter, "How can he say that? It wasn't my choice to be in this room." He said to himself. But he continued with his practice like nothing happened. Again tearing through the wrestlers, Laci knew he would have some better competition soon, maybe even the kid who said that stupid remark... but he was never scared of that day.

The matches, came and went, and Laci hasn't been beat, 7-0 was his record. Three more to go and the league tourney was soon, and he was expected to be the first seed. Therefore those matches came quick, and so did the 3 added wins, to his record. Tournament day was tomorrow, and Laci was ready- correct weight, and mentally and physically prepared. He was a seven year old but had the desire of an Olympian. All he could begin to think about was THAT tournament, and THAT gold medal. His father an also well dedicated wrestler, wanted to shut him up, but he was amused by his determination. It was almost certain he would take the gold, but overconfidence never conquered Laci's personality. It is almost hard people could take such a young kid seriously, and believe how dedicated he was to one thing, one sport, one tournament. "Wake up already, Laci!" exclaimed his father, who had no clue Laci was already six steps ahead in the kitchen making himself a PB&J. His father hurried in return to Laci being far ahead. Soon they were out the door. Car rides might have been short, but they were fun to Laci, fun to be around his father, like he rarely was. Music usually filled the car, but this was replaced with a talk.

"You know, Win or lose, you'll still do great in my heart, my opinion." His father made that obvious for Laci to understand. . . but Laci was silent.

"Winning *was* everything, losing couldn't be an option, could it?" Laci thought... but he only answered with an okay, and there they were. The gymnasium was filled with teams hungry to win, pride, and defeat. Everything was attendant but the one to win it, and Laci did the job of filling in the spot. First match was always easy, but Laci always kept his confident level at the perfect point. The match began as always . . . and the match ended as always. Laci had his hand raised in no time and was back on the bleachers preparing and just thinking.

The tournament was a bracket of about 12 kids, which guaranteed 3 matches, so Laci's next was

up soon , and it was the quarter-finals. He soon manged his way upstairs the prodigious school, and found his father. He congratulated him once and again, then set the story straight.

"Laci, your next match wont be in the walk in the park. . . go in and do what you know to do, win or lose- good job."

Laci listened clearly- but forgot the last five words his father mentioned. Losing wasn't an option . . . at least in Laci's heart.

Laci made his way upstairs to the cafeteria to see his father, but was surprised by the sight of his sister and mother. They had never liked this type of thing. Laci always thought since he was only in second grade, and his sister was making her way to high school- she would have not cared.

" It was Taylor's choice to come here, she really wanted to see you." his mother explained thoroughly.

"Yeah, Yeah." Taylor said.

She didn't want to make it obvious she was yearning to go to the tournament, but in her heart she really wanted to go. Laci was happy. Everyone was there and he was more confident than ever.

But Laci was never too over confident of himself. Today was his day, and he was determined to win. Soon bracket sheets were posted and, Laci's heart was racing as if it was the last moment of his life, but he knew there would be plenty more of those to come. He usually avoided the big crowds surrounding the bracket sheet, but his excitement overcame his habits, and when they were posted he was the first one to be there. Bout- 27, Laci Oliver- Easton vs. Randy Evans- Allentown, was Laci's first scheduled match, and the ambition kicked in.

The match was roughly 30 minutes away, so that left no space for fooling around. Concentration overcame Laci's thoughts, He preferred being alone while he was thinking. Just needed time to himself and dedicate everything he was thinking of to his upcoming match, not the last, not the next. Praying became a habit to him. A way to hope but at the same time avoiding unneeded stress.

" Please help me work to the potential of how hard I have trained in the past, and aid me in earning, my arms raised, in front of my coaches, family, and future opponents, that will soon have the same pain granted to them."

Laci repeated to the one above. He hasn't went to church much or anything, and only went to CCD when his parents could afford it. But he believed any hope or support could not hurt.

"Bout 27!, Mat 3!, Bout 27!" the announcer exclaimed as if it would shorten his wasted time at the tournament.

He wasn't up just yet. He had ways to go. Sort of. He was on deck, and the match before him, could have been a quick pin or a match of excessive overtime. In Laci's eyes he wanted it to be over as fast as possible to, to carry on to winning his. Too bad for Laci, his thoughts jinxed him. And the match seemed not to go any faster as he watched. Soon enough him and his dad shooed him from concentrating on that match, and start to begin thinking on how he will start and end his match. He and his dad always believed that sitting there wasting space on the edge of the mat doing nothing was useless, like all the others spent time doing. He utilized his time much more usefully, by actually warming up and walking onto that mat ready to go, opposed to, stomaching a late slice of pizza, cold. And that's exactly what Laci did, and took care of business, as his coach said. Laci scored quickly of his feet and sent him straight to his back, gently resting his shoulders to the mat, as if it wasn't even a challenge. It was almost certain the next few matches would be close to a takedown clinic. A short intermission soon lead after his match. This left time for him to think, of strategy, and his next competition. He did just that for a short while, until his dad gradually convinced him to go play. Be a kid. Laci walked over to Scotty and Petey,

and joined in on their “water bottle football” game. Scotty and Pete Were good wrestlers , but not as committed, like a normal 7 year old would be. It was odd of how dedicated Laci actually was , but nobody stopped him. The continued their grueling of football that led to minor bruises, but they were tough. What everyone tried to explain to Laci was wrestling was just a game, something to have fun with- Just like the football game, just like any other would look at it, but in Laci’s perspective it was MUCH different.

Winning wasn't everything it was the only thing. Even if his parents weren't hard on him, nor his coaches, he was his worst enemy. In a way it worked to his advantage but at times, his psychcd himself out. He was always pointed out his strong points, and was the biggest critic anybody could ever be.

His next match came up quick after the minor intermission. He didn’t bother looking at the bracket sheet. He had let his father do that. Soon Bout 58 was up faster then they had thought it ever show up, but it was there. He had wrestled the same kid, late in the season. It was a Tough match. But Laci's adrenaline and determination doubled his average skill. Laci bounced, and bounced and prepared an early sweat, before he began. Match was up , and once again ambition kicked in. Laci's blood was pumping as if his heart was one Chevy big block engine, pistons flashing up and down pounding his chest. Shook hands, and it began. In short time the opponent took him down, he thought “Come on Laci, What are you doing!” sent into gear by his thought, Laci reversed control leaving the score as a tie. He then put all his strength, all his power into rocking him back, locking his hands with the grip of gorilla glue, locking him in a lethal cross face cradle. He kicked, and kicked. . . and tried to pry him self out of the grip , but just couldn't bare to do it. Laci won once again.

It felt great, as the ref raised his hand. Probably just about one the greatest feelings on earth. But thought how much better it would feel in the finals. He was congratulated by his parents and Taylor and he felt as if nothing could get any better. Laci then got a quick snack, and right back on the mat. His match was up quick again, no shock there. He knew who he had to wrestle, he met him about a couple times. Laci wasn't a fan, the upcoming opponents confidence level was through the roof and past it. Laci was sorta’ the underdog, even if he won the past match. Some thought he'd win, some had different opinions. He didn't care. He just concentrated on his match.

Time began to run. Laci was warming up and began to think, “What if I *do lose*, what would happen.” .

He washed the thought out of his head, and replaced the spot with positive thoughts.

His match was up- he noticed after the announcement call of the match. Laci undressed of his sweats and prepared what soon would be a battle. Shook hands, and it was on. Laci-gradually used his strength , chipping down his stamina, but his opponents skill overcame that for a slight time, and swepted Laci’s legs from underneath and took him down. Laci’s head was blank, he just reacted to every move he made, and quickly escaped-still losing, but caught up quite a bit. Laci then contained is anger set back, and relaxed for a bit to , get his head straight. He then reloaded, and got to work. reacting to the score not on his favor, Laci shot in and gained for the winning edge. Laci worked, and worked, and tried everything to land his shoulders on the mat. All he remembered was just yelling. He was overwhelmed-didn’t know what to do, and mistakenly hung his head, resulting in the situation flipped, Laci was on his back. Complete panic, rushed through his head, he was clueless, His opponent daringly reached back and rolled over Laci. As he was being pined for the first time, he could see that joy on he others face. He flailed and kicked, but the next thing he heard was the refs hand slamming the mat- signal for a

pin. Laci, abashed in failure, he hung his head and as he slowly lifted it, he noticed the happiness of his opponent, and his hand in the air. The kid scanned the crowd, letting them know who the winner was. But he sure didn't deserve it. Laci quietly, and gradually walked off the mat to calm down, and have some time to himself. Then that was when he caught a glance of his past opponent.

"Hey Laci boy, nice match, too bad you couldn't win." He remarked in a churlish, witty manor.

It then took Laci a bit to process he even had the nerve to say that, But once he did, Laci's fist connected with his chin. A fight broke out, and Laci's anger overcame himself, and all he remembered after he pummeled the kid into oblivion was his dad calming him down, and taking him home. No words. No scolding. Just home. Laci began to think he was nothing more than crap. He felt terrible. Between losing to the most overconfident fool in the United States of America, He also embarrassed his team, his father, and himself. He felt an apology would be best, but he needed to wait. The ride home was quiet, but he glanced over at his father multiple times, to discover any sign of disappointment. But his father's emotion was very different, rather bland. However Laci knew he was angered with him, and felt terrible about it. He wanted to apologize. But he didn't quite have the heart to do it.

He woke up early the next morning, arising from his guilt. And continued the day like any other but quite upset. Finally, he finished school, and ended up gaining guts, to present an apology to his father. After the short bus ride home, Laci made his way down the street, but shortly interrupted, by a loud honk coming from his father's truck.

"Hop in, We're going to eat."

Car ride was quiet, but it left time for him to generate a plan how to present the apology, but he sort of knew the meeting was just because of that. As they pulled into the parking lot, he hopped out of the truck and continued into IHop. It was sorta' weird to eat at a breakfast place, for dinner-but it was also an advantage in a way to spend some time and box out all the frivolous activity. As they sat down, his dad began on the subject.

"Now, Laci, I know you were not yourself, and I know you wished you would have won, but that is no way to act. . . and unacceptable."

Laci returned to display his side of the story, but his father abruptly repeated-

"NO, way to act, No way to display yourself, you're better than that."

Laci quietly shook his head, he much rather have his father yell till' his lungs were sore, but this was way worse, his father's face painted the picture of pure disappointment.

"Dad, I'm sorry, I feel terrible, you have *no idea*."

Laci said, after the hundred times it repeated in his head.

"Actually Laci, I DO know, that why I've been so calm with you-I've been through this. Howa' bout' we finished this with a man's shake, and forget about this."

"*Pheww*" Laci whispered, after wiping the sweat off his head.

And that's exactly what they did. Shook hands, and forgot. . . They ended up not even ordering anything, neither of them were hungry anyways. It was just some time to get some stress off their chest.

Soon they went home, and Laci repeated his days, the same way he always did, caused trouble, and had fun. The season was over, but Laci never forgot. His true love was wrestling. Quickly summer came, and he was relieved of the grueling task of school. Laci couldn't feel better. Him, Scotty and Petey spent the summer, with back to back sleep overs, camp outs, and Airsoft gun wars. The three were true young boys, all they did was care about was having fun,

and getting home at night back to their family's. Taylor was also having a good time this summer, hanging out and gossiping with her high school friends, but the most fun she had was with her crazy little brother Laci. They'd do all sorts of stuff. Laci sometimes would teach her a move or two, or even spy on her. Even though he was a little gnat. Taylor loved him, and so did he.

Sometimes, if a day's work earned Taylor a bit extra money, she would pick Laci up after work to 711, and buy him his favorite, "Any Capps" Cheddar fries. This went on for weeks, ever since she landed a job at Wal-mart. But Laci was surprised this time she didn't call him, he grew worried, but collectively stayed cool. Soon his phone rang and his emotions bounced with excitement. It was Taylor and she told him she was running late because she was working overtime. She had no time to spend to pick up Laci, so she said she would just drop his snack off at the house after the trip. But maybe if she had picked up Laci, the time she arrived at 711 would be different, much more *alive*.

Taylor unluckily showed up at 711 during a robbery. . . She was shot through the windows of her red jeep. Police showed up soon to find her dead. Quickly after, Laci's parents were noticed with a call from their close friend- a currently employed local police man.

"Yo! what's up Mikey! How ya' been ." Laci's father said as he answered the phone as he usually did. The Police man, then presented him the news. then the tears started, progressively adding on, as his father remembered the memories of his young daughter. Laci knew something was wrong. Then his father attempted to tell him in a civil manner, but that was transformed into an upset, wreck of words presented to the mother, and brother of Taylor.

They couldn't believe it. Laci was the calmest of them all, on their way to the scene. But deeply the most upset out of the three. Once they finally arrived the parents, ran through the slight obstacle of caution tape, and dropped to their knees, on the sight of their dead daughter. Laci walked over, hands in his pockets, and gradually began to cry. Joining his mother and father in the mourning of the death, Laci thought, "why him?" or "what did he do to deserve it." but the funny thing was he *didn't* deserve it. Things happen, and this was one of those *things* that sometimes happen to a select few. However, there is nothing you can really do besides remember and cherish the life of those who do pass away.

In short, If all is taken from you there is nothing you can really do besides just keep going.